Heritage 2033: our impact in year one, 2024–2025

03/03/2026

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Exploring the difference our funding is making for the heritage sector after the first full year of grant making under our 10-year strategy.

Overview

In March 2023, we launched Heritage 2033, a strategy that sets out our vision for heritage that is valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.

This is our first report on its impact.

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: “It’s still very early to report in depth, as many of the projects we’ve funded in this period haven’t completed yet. And some, such as our landscape-scale and capital investments, will take some years to deliver. But the data we’ve collected so far shows promising signs that our grants are already making a real difference.”

The findings shared here are therefore based mainly on grant applications in the first year of Heritage 2033, which opened in February 2024.

To find out more about our impact measurement approach, see the below section: How we’re measuring our impact.

The first year of Heritage 2033

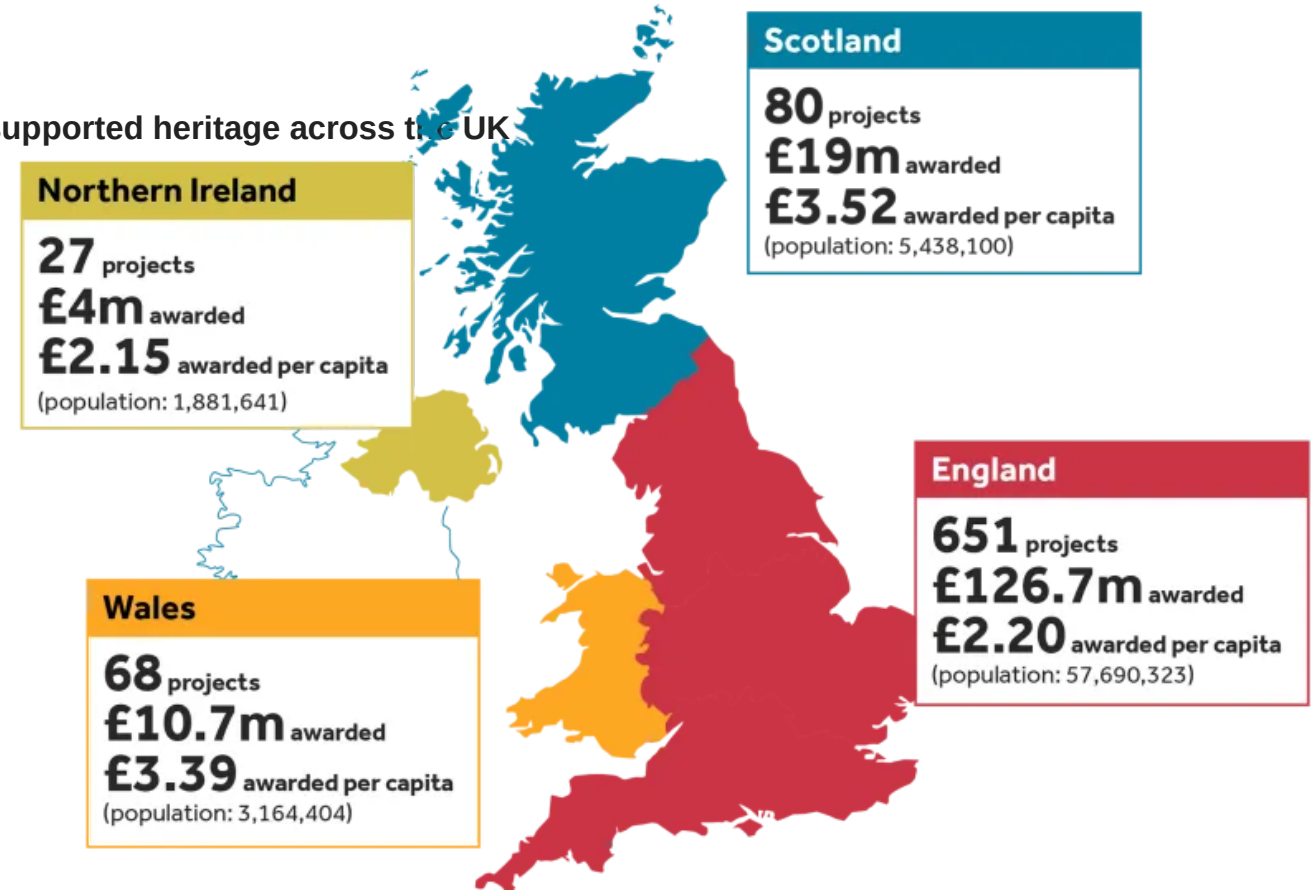
Balancing investment across all parts of the UK and all types of heritage is an important part of our aims and ambitions through Heritage 2033.

£375million invested in 826 projects across the UK in 2024–2025

From February 2024 to end March 2025, we invested £375million in 826 projects across the UK. (Of this total, £214m is future delivery round applications.) We also committed to tackle large-scale and cross-territory challenges via our initial strategic initiatives: Heritage Places, Nature Towns and Cities, Landscape Connections and Heritage in Need (initially covering Places of Worship).

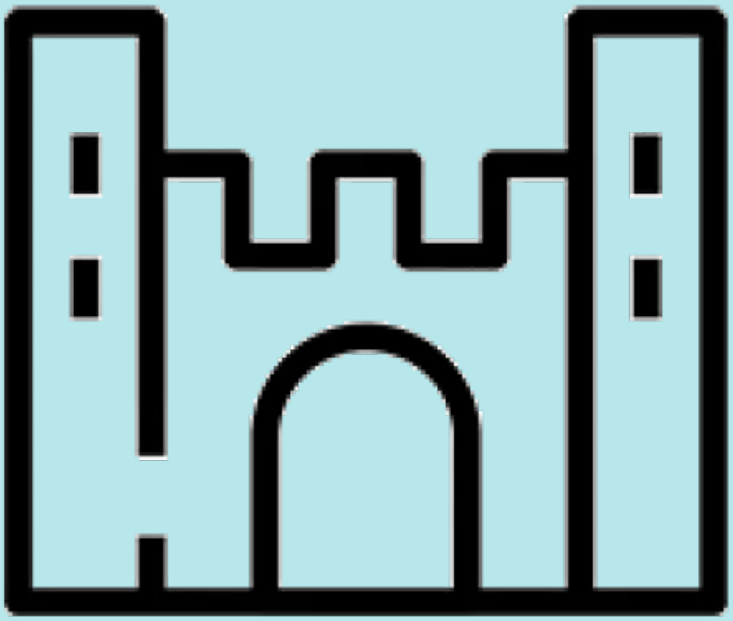
Below we report on the spread and impact of awarded funding (not including potential future delivery round awards) which totalled £161m up to end of March 2025.

We supported heritage across the UK



Area/nation	Number of projects	Amount awarded	Awarded per capita	Population
England	651	£126.7m	£2.20	57,690,323
Scotland	80	£19m	£3.52	5,438,100
Wales	68	£10.7m	£3.39	3,164,404
Northern Ireland	27	£4m	£2.15	1,881,641
Total	826	£161m	£2.35	68,174,468

We supported a range of heritage types



Areas, buildings and monuments

- **Number of Heritage 2033 projects: 257 (27%)**
- **Amount awarded: £63m**



Cultures and memories

- **Number of Heritage 2033 projects: 242 (38%)**
- **Amount awarded: £24.5m**



Industrial, maritime and transport

- **Number of Heritage 2033 projects: 41 (5%)**
- **Amount awarded: £7.6m**



Landscapes, nature and parks

- **Number of Heritage 2033 projects: 144 (16%)**
- **Amount awarded: £27m**



Museums, libraries and archives

- **Number of Heritage 2033 projects: 142 (13%)**
- **Amount awarded: £38m**



2024–2025 total

- **Number of Heritage 2033 projects: 826 (100%)**
- **Amount awarded: £161m**

What’s happening so far?

The early signs of impact through Heritage 2033 are promising. The projects we’re funding are already making a real difference for people, places and the environment.

For example:

- **Saving heritage** – four out of five projects are protecting heritage at risk through activities such as restoration, conservation, research, preserving traditional skills and digitisation.
- **Bringing heritage to more people** – over a third of projects are making heritage more available to people and communities. We have also funded projects to improve accessibility of heritage: nearly 400 projects are creating digital access to heritage, 150 projects are supporting accessible interpretation and 47 projects are removing barriers to physical access.
- **Supporting place-based change** – around half of our projects are helping communities feel more connected to where they live and nearly a quarter hope to have place-based impacts through activities such as regeneration and improving local economies.

- **Supporting nature and improving environmental sustainability** – nearly a fifth of projects are helping nature recover. Almost a third are working to improve their organisation's environmental footprint and sustainability is being considered by around a quarter of projects delivering capital works.
- **Connecting people to nature** – over a quarter of projects are enabling nature connection through guided walks, participatory activities and the creation of green spaces.
- **Inclusion is a key feature** – involving communities is a core theme of project work through activities that range from consultation to co-creation and shared ownership**.**
- **Building skills** – over a quarter of projects are working on boosting skills, including building organisational capacity, supporting heritage careers and increasing community stewardship of heritage.
- **Improving diversity in the heritage sector** – almost half of the organisations we funded in the first year of Heritage 2033 identify as 'diverse-led'. More than half of the organisations we fund serve at least one specific community, most commonly younger people, people who are educationally or economically disadvantaged or older people.

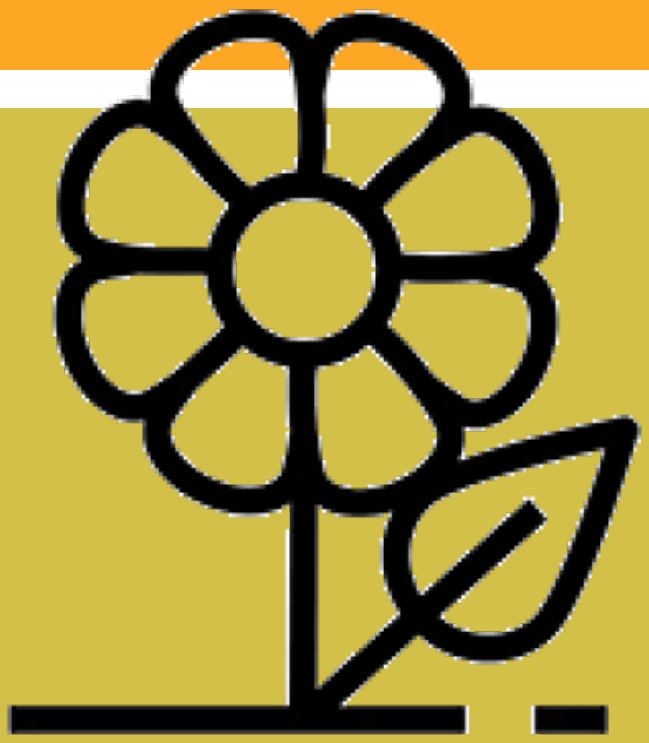
Grant applications must take all four investment principles into account. The strength of focus and emphasis on each principle is up to applicants to decide and demonstrate. During assessment, grant applications are identified as strongly taking into account, taking into account or not taking into account each investment principle. The blocks below show the number and proportion of projects 'strongly meeting' each investment principle.

Projects 'strongly meeting' each investment principle



Saving heritage

445 projects (54%)



Protecting the environment

191 projects (23%)



Inclusion, access and participation

401 projects (49%)



Organisational sustainability

230 projects (28%)

Reflection and looking forward

The impact data so far shows strong alignment with our four investment principles: saving heritage; protecting the environment; inclusion, access and participation; and organisational sustainability. We can see positive early signs of progress towards the ambition of Heritage 2033, particularly in saving heritage and making heritage more available to communities across the UK.

Eilish said: “I am delighted with what we’ve achieved so far, but I know there’s still a lot of work ahead to meet the long-term ambitions of Heritage 2033.”

Our analysis highlighted some areas to focus on, especially around environmental impact, helping more people connect with heritage and supporting organisations to strengthen governance and leadership.

We are exploring these findings as we move to the next phase of delivering Heritage 2033, which will be set out in our 2026–2029 delivery plan. For example, we will consider how to optimise the strategic initiatives to ensure impact in place-based working, nature and landscapes and supporting heritage in need. And we will consider how we can boost

our impact in areas such as financial resilience and heritage skills.

Our strategy was developed through the generous contributions and expertise of many people and partners who care about heritage. As we continue to deliver Heritage 2033, we are committed to maintaining these conversations, listening to our stakeholders and grantees and drawing on emerging evidence about our impact to adapt and respond to changing external demands. Over the course of Heritage 2033 we will periodically share impact data in articles and reports on our website.

How we're measuring our impact

We developed an impact framework to help us measure and collect evidence about the difference our funding makes. It is based on the four investment principles that underpin the strategy and will use both quantitative and qualitative data to assess progress against our ambitions.

Each investment principle has a single impact statement that summarises the change we want to achieve. We also want to demonstrate the impact the Heritage Fund has on pride in place, reviving heritage and the economy.

We are committed to understanding the impact of Heritage 2033 so we can demonstrate progress towards our vision for heritage and adapt to challenges and opportunities during the 10-year life of the strategy.

The findings on this page are based on what we learned from grant applications in the first year of delivering Heritage 2033 grants, from February 2024 to end March 2025. In time, we will use data from a wider range of sources in our impact reporting. Our impact framework is a live tool that we will expand and refine further as we implement it. We do not have all the data for each measure available to us yet, but we're working to gather higher quality, consistent data from applicants and grantees and through other sources of evidence, such as case studies and surveys.

Below is an overview of the impact framework including some of the measures and data we will gather. In addition, we are working to assess and understand the economic impact of the projects we fund, which will draw on data including job, volunteer and apprenticeship numbers and volunteer hours.

Our impact framework – measures and data

Investment principle	Impact statement	Evidence we will collect and track
Saving heritage	Heritage is revitalised and its condition is improved	• data assessing heritage at risk • data held on external risk registers • case studies and evaluations, eg: Heritage Places evaluation

Investment principle	Impact statement	Evidence we will collect and track
Protecting the environment	Natural heritage is in recovery	• nature recovery data • carbon footprint data • case studies and evaluations, eg: Landscape Connections evaluation
Inclusion, access and participation	More people can access and connect to heritage	• visitor numbers • number of heritage assets available for people to access • organisation and beneficiary demographic data • case studies
Organisational sustainability	Organisations we fund are more skilled and financially secure	• skill development for staff, trustees and apprentices • financial account data • case studies and evaluations, eg: Heritage Innovation Fund evaluation

Methodology: how we analysed our impact in 2024–2025

To assess progress in this first year of grant making, we focused on the evidence provided in grant applications, rather than project completion data, given we're still in the early stages of Heritage 2033. The findings shared on this page and informing our next three-year delivery plan are based on the period from February 2024 to the end of March 2025 and draw on:

- Heritage Fund data from applications and funded projects under Heritage 2033 relating to their organisations and grants (826 projects)
- analysis of project outcomes and activities detailed in grant application forms (809 projects)

How we currently collect data from applicants and grantees on the diversity of staff, leadership and communities served

Since the start of Heritage 2033, we've used questions aligned with the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Data Standard, a framework used by many funders.

During registration we ask:

- Is there a specific community that your organisation is dedicated to serving? Select any that apply.
- Does more than 75% of your organisation's leadership and staff self-identify as any of the following? Select all that apply.

During application we ask:

- Is there a specific community your project is dedicated to serving? Select any that apply.

All three questions require selecting options from this list of communities:

- communities experiencing ethnic or racial inequity, discrimination or inequality
- faith communities
- people who have migrated and/or have experience of the immigration system
- d/Deaf, disabled, blind, partially sighted and/or neurodivergent people
- older people (65 and over)
- younger people (under 25)
- women and girls
- LGBTQ+ people
- people who are educationally or economically disadvantaged
- specific groups that are not included already
- none of the above

The data reported on this page uses the term 'diverse-led' to describe organisations who say they are led by **at least one** of the communities listed above.

We are currently reviewing our use of the DEI Data Standard and in the future may use a different set of questions and categorisations to understand progress in this area of Heritage 2033.

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act of Heritage 2033



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Investment principles